



FACT SHEET

Salmonella infection (Salmonellosis)

What is it?

- Salmonellosis is an infection of the intestines caused by bacteria called *Salmonella*.

Symptoms

- Symptoms usually develop 6 to 72 hours after consuming infected food or drink. Symptoms typically last 4 to 7 days and can include:
 - Diarrhea
 - Stomach cramps
 - Headache
 - Fever
 - Vomiting
 - Dehydration (fluid loss), especially among infants and the elderly.

How is it spread?

- *Salmonella* bacteria leave the body in the stool. Persons infected with *Salmonella* can pass the bacteria to others if they do not wash their hands well after using the bathroom.
- A person can become infected with *Salmonella* by:
 - Eating food or drinking water or milk that has been contaminated with *Salmonella* bacteria.
 - Touching infected animals and then eating or touching the mouth without washing hands first. Infected animals often do not appear sick. Animals commonly infected with *Salmonella* include chickens, ducks, pigs, cows, rodents, and reptiles such as snakes, lizards, and turtles. Pets are a common source of infection.
 - Eating ready-to-eat foods (foods that don't need to be cooked) that have been prepared with utensils, or on food preparation surfaces contaminated with *Salmonella*.

Diagnosis and Treatment

- Salmonella infection is usually diagnosed by a stool culture.

- Most people recover without treatment. Antibiotics are sometimes used for people with severe illness. Antibiotics may also be helpful for young infants and people with certain chronic medical conditions such as cancer, sickle cell disease, HIV infection, other immune system problems, and chronic gastrointestinal disease.
- Drink plenty of liquids to prevent dehydration.

Prevention

- Wash hands with soap and warm water after going to the bathroom, changing diapers, touching animals/pets, and before and after handling food, and before eating.
- Wash hands after touching animals/pets, animal feces, or items contaminated with animal feces such as bedding, dishes, or swimming/bathing water.
- Avoid eating raw or undercooked meats, poultry, fish, and eggs.
- Consume only pasteurized milk and dairy products.
- Wash fruits and vegetables before eating.
- Eliminate cross-contamination from raw foods to cooked ones by thorough washing of cutting boards, utensils, and hands, and by discarding used meat and poultry packages.
- Do not use food preparation areas to bathe pets or to wash their dishes, cages, or aquariums.
- Reptiles (including turtles) are not appropriate pets for small children and should not be in the same house as the infant.
- **People with diarrhea should not work as food handlers, care for children or provide health care. Children with diarrhea should not attend child care or school.**

Report all cases to El Paso Department of Public Health by calling 915-212-6520

